

September 18, 2023

The Honorable Claude M. Hilton
U.S. District Court Judge
401 Courthouse Square
Alexandria, Virginia 22204

Dear Judge Hilton,

I am writing to provide insight to the character of Mr. James Meek, my ex-husband to whom I was married from 2001-2012, and have known since 1995. I have lived in Arlington, Virginia for nearly 30 years and have been employed full-time in the non-profit sector, on Capitol Hill with senior members of both the House and Senate, worked at two U.S. federal agencies and am employed currently in the private sector. I serve as a volunteer Board member for a non-profit school related organization and am involved with my community. I believe my perspective as his former spouse and mother of our children offers valuable insight into his character and commitment as a father.

First and foremost, I fully recognize the gravity of the current situation, without question. I do however wish to provide insight as to Mr. Meek's character outside of this condition; with regard to the two people most important to him, his children. Despite the challenges that often accompany divorce, Mr. Meek has consistently upheld his responsibilities when it has involved our children's well-being. He did not waver in providing financial support, consistently ensuring that child support payments were made on time, and in full, to guarantee that our children had access to everything they need. Mr. Meek provided a safe and comfortable home very near to my home so the children would not need to travel far from school, from friends or from me at any time.

Furthermore, Mr. Meek consistently strived to be an active and involved parent in our children's lives. In fact, during our settlement negotiations Mr. Meek made certain to not become the "every other weekend" father and insisted on having time during the week with the children as a means of being engaged in the everyday activity of their lives. From the time they were infants he made it a priority to be present at the important milestones. He attended parent-teacher conferences, brought them to school, sports practices, games, as well as theater and musical productions – offering encouragement and support.

One of the many ways Mr. Meek has shown his love to our children is through his creation of special photo and story books that capture the precious moments he spent with them. These thoughtful gestures demonstrate his commitment to preserving for our children the memories he has had with them and ensuring they know and feel cherished by their father. When they were little, Mr. Meek would read stories to them and use silly voices for characters to make the reading extra special; fostering a strong bond and a love for literature and writing that continues to this day.

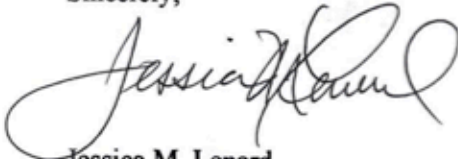
As they grew, Mr. Meek also consistently provided enriching experiences for the children – taking them to museums in DC, travelling to sites to walk an historic battlefield, exploring Native American culture of the Southwest or kayaking the Shenandoah River. He has provided vacation opportunities that have allowed our daughters to explore new places, learn about different cultures, and create lasting memories for them as a family.

In summary, Mr. Meek has been a source of unwavering support for our children's dreams and aspirations. He has encouraged them to pursue their goals and helped to foster an environment in which they feel empowered to reach for their dreams. Mr. Meek is a loving and dedicated father who has consistently recognized our children's well-being, happiness and growth. I firmly believe that the qualities that have defined his parenting over the years to be reflective of his overall character.

Again, I fully understand the gravity of Mr. Meek's current situation, including the stress and strain it has caused our children and his relationship with them. However, he will always be their Dad and has never wavered in his love for them. I respectfully request that the court consider Mr. Meek's history of responsible parenting and the positive impact that he has had on our children's lives, and recognize the many years ahead that they may hopefully share together.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments. I am willing to provide further information to attest to Mr. Meek's character in this regard.

Sincerely,



Handwritten signature of Jessica M. Lenard in cursive script.

Jessica M. Lenard

The Honorable Claude M. Hilton
United States District Court Judge
401 Courthouse Square
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Dear Judge Hilton,

My name is Raymond J. Gannon and I am a retired Special Agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, having served for over twenty-eight years and prior to that I served as an Officer in the United States Marine Corps for four years.

I first became acquainted with James Meek in April of 2018, just a few short months after my wife, Debra and I were notified by the United States Army, that my step-son, Jeremiah W. Johnson, was killed in action as a result of an ambush by ISIS terrorists at Tongo Tongo, Niger, Africa. At the time of Jeremiah's death, he was serving as a member of Operational Detachment Alpha 3212, Third Special Forces Group.

During this time of grief and confusion, my wife and I sought the assistance of James Meek, an investigative reporter with a solid reputation for searching out the truth. My wife and I were attending a seminar sponsored by TAPS (Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors) for parents of children who were killed in service to our country. In our group was a couple who had lost their son in Afghanistan. Vickie and Dave Sharrett told us how it was reported to them that their son had been killed as a result of enemy fire, only to discover that their son was in fact killed by friendly fire and the subsequent cover up by the United States Army to prevent the general public from learning the truth that the Sharrett's son was killed by his own lieutenant. The Sharrett's explained to us that it took over five years of investigation by James Meek to prove that the United States Army would be capable of such a cover up. We wanted James to help our family learn the truth about Jeremiah and the other three soldiers who also lost their lives that same day.

James worked tirelessly for over three years to finally uncover the deception and lies we had been told about the events that led up to the final battle that resulted in the deaths of four American soldiers on October 4, 2017. On November 11, 2021, the film "3212 Unredacted" was released which detailed in depth the lengths to which United States Army would go to cover up bad decisions and protect senior officers at the expense of grieving families.

In my opinion, your Honor, I feel James Meek is a hero, who put his personal reputation on the line for my family and the families of the other three soldiers, Staff Sergeant Bryan Black, Staff Sergeant Dustin Wright and Sergeant La Davis Johnson.

This is not the only time that James has used his position as an investigative journalist to help families in need.

James was instrumental in setting up the privately organized effort to extricate hundreds of Afghan national citizens from terror of the Taliban controlled Afghanistan. These brave men and women who served as interpreters and military partners to US forces in Afghanistan and were left behind by the US government were able to flee Afghanistan because of the help and assistance of James Meek and his comrades. James and his comrades took it upon themselves to honor the debt of gratitude owed by this country to these Afghan refugees.

James has utilized his many talents over the years to help so many individuals and families and bring comfort and resolution to tragedies that have taken place during the war on terror. My family has had many questions answered concerning the death of my step-son, Jeremiah W. Johnson, and because of James, I believe the United States Army has gone to great lengths to honor Jeremiah's sacrifice. Since the release of "3212 Unredacted", the new Ground Support Battalion Headquarters building at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina has been named Johnson Hall, in Jeremiah's honor. Jeremiah initially received a Bronze Star with "V" for his heroism and that award has subsequently been upgraded to a Silver Star. In addition, Jeremiah was made an Honorary Green Beret in recognition of his courage and sacrifice during the battle at Tongo Tongo in which he demonstrated exceptional leadership and heroism. Jeremiah was also inducted into the United States Army Chemical Hall of Fame at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri. All of these accolades and honors, I believe were directly the result of James Meek's investigative efforts to provide answers and the truth for our family. For this, my family will always be grateful and thankful for everything James has done to provide us,

Nonetheless, James has told my wife and I that he deeply regrets his behavior and acknowledges the actions that have caused such pain and sorrow to his family and friends. James fully realizes that his behavior was inexcusable and truly regrets what he has done. James explained to us that during his incarceration, he has used that time to reflect upon his life and the horrible decisions that resulted in the destruction of his family and career. James has sought counseling and spiritual guidance and is striving to ensure that his life going forward will be a better one as he attempts to restore his family.

As a friend of James, I will make every effort to see that his life gets back on track and offer any and all support to him in this journey.

Very Respectfully,
Raymond J. Gannon

The Honorable Claude M. Hilton
US District Court Judge
401 Courthouse Square
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Dear Judge Hilton,

I humbly submit this character letter on behalf of my friend and former colleague, James Gordon Meek.

My name is Andrew W. Fredericks. I am 60 years old, a career journalist and filmmaker. I have spent the past 30 plus years producing, directing and editing documentaries for PBS and network Television. I have worked on a breadth of films that range from a biography of John Philip Sousa to issues of national security, and everything in between.

I came to know James through our work together at ABC News. What started as a wholly a professional relationship in about 2015, grew into a friendship of mutual respect and admiration. We were colleagues, but we are also friends who share our thoughts and feelings on things far beyond the realm of our work. To that end, James has helped me grow and mature into the man I am.

One of my goals is always to be fair and compassionate, to look at every story or collection of facts from various angles. If nothing else, this has taught me that I sometimes must hold contradictory ideas in my head as both being true. Such is my sentiment on James Gordon Meek.

I am indeed shocked by the revelations I learned about my friend, and have spent a great deal of time trying to reconcile the man I know with the man accused of the crimes to which he has pleaded guilty. I can't speak to the side of James who would have done such things, but I can tell you about the James Meek I know.

The James that I have come to know and love is as selfless and empathetic a person as I have ever known. In his professional pursuits as a journalist, he would tirelessly pursue the truth for those who have been wronged in some way. One clear example of this is the years he spent (much of it on his own time) to uncover the truth behind the friendly fire death of a young soldier named David H Sharrett II, who the Pentagon falsely claimed was killed by enemy combatants. Dave's father was broken and sensed he was being lied to. He turned to James, who vowed he would find out the truth. In the end, James did just that. Through his dogged dedication to fulfilling that vow, he proved that David had been accidentally shot by his own commanding officer, a fact that was covered up by military officials. It did not bring his son back, but it brought peace to a grieving father, which was James's goal from the outset.

I witnessed a similar scenario in 2017 when the families of four fallen Green Berets suspected the military was lying to them about the circumstances surrounding their sons' deaths in Niger, Africa. Again, James vowed to those families to find out the truth about what happened and why. Again, he spent hundreds of hours in that pursuit, and again he alone proved that the version provided by the military was largely fictitious. While his investigation was the basis for the award-winning documentary **3212 Un-Redacted**, James's motivation was bringing some peace to people in pain.

And finally, during America's disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021, James was instrumental in helping save the lives of numerous Afghani nationals who had worked alongside the US military, and would have likely been executed by the Taliban. James worked in secret, night and day, to secure the safe passage of numerous men and their families. To this day, his role in that life-saving operation remains unknown. But for James, it was never about recognition; it was about giving aid to those in need, at any personal cost.

While working with James, I would often hear of him spending hours on the phone with weeping parents or wives, who needed someone to listen. He would drive hundreds of miles to attend a funeral or a dedication ceremony. He once rightfully scolded me when I wanted to film the father of a fallen soldier being evicted from his home. "His pain is far too great for you to film. I won't allow it," he insisted. His empathy outweighed our need for footage.

I knew James to be a loving and dedicated father. His daughters are his shining pride, and his love for them is a reason that I believe that James has done and will continue do all in his power to overcome whatever trauma had contributed to his crimes. Based on our correspondence over the past months, I believe James is already on the road to redemption and change.

And finally, after getting over the initial shock of learning of James's arrest and conviction, I searched my soul on how I might move forward in a supportive relationship with a friend who had committed serious and troubling offenses without condoning his behavior. I concluded that I needed to do what I believe James would do if the roles were reversed. I am sure he wouldn't abandon me, whatever the personal risk, so I have vowed to do the same. While I abhor his transgressions, I stand will by him, and try to help him overcome and grow, both while he is incarcerated and after his release.

Respectfully,
Andrew W. Fredericks

The Honorable Claude M. Hilton
US District Court Judge
401 Courthouse Square
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Dear Judge Hilton,

I write to you in support of my friend James Meek. I am a retired U.S. Army Special Forces colonel with 28 years of active duty. I also had the privilege of serving as the Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict. More importantly, I am also a practicing Catholic, very active in my parish community, and have been happily married for over 32 years. My wife and I are the proud parents of two beautiful and successful daughters.

As a father, a husband, and committed Christian who values human dignity, trust, and respect, I recognize the gravity of the offenses to which James has admitted. The involvement of children, even remotely, in these crimes is especially offensive to me and undoubtedly deserves punishment. Yet, the scope of that punishment is almost always subject to considerations beyond mere guilt and innocence and it is some of those considerations that I wish to address.

I first met James in 2016, when he was working for ABC News and reporting on the death of Kayla Mueller in Syria. She had been kidnapped, held hostage, forced into sexual slavery and ultimately killed by the Islamic State. I had been a Director for Counterterrorism on President Obama's National Security Council in 2014. In that capacity, I was the lead NSC staffer for all hostage issues. Originally a bit adversarial, our relationship matured into a friendship based on mutual respect. Over the years, James and I remained in contact and would episodically meet to discuss national security issues. Then, in 2018, he began work on a documentary about the ambush of a Special Forces detachment in Niger, the deaths of 4 Americans, and the subsequent Pentagon investigation of the incident. At James' request, I was interviewed and appeared on camera in the documentary.

In my humble opinion, that documentary reflected very well on James. Firstly, it was a service to the Republic and to the truth. James correctly assessed that the Pentagon investigation had been hopelessly inadequate and unjustly tarnished the valor, patriotism, and fidelity of those brave soldiers. I remain grateful for the opportunity to speak out that he afforded to me. The documentary was a much needed corrective to an official account that was based on falsehoods and calumnies designed to protect senior officers from accountability. Secondly, it was an important correction for the families who lost loved ones in battle only to see their reputations callously and egregiously besmirched.

I had always considered James to be an honest and patriotic public servant, whether as a journalist or when serving as a congressional staffer. In the process of making that documentary, I developed a deeper personal admiration for James' commitment to the truth and his genuine concern for and connections with these families. Now, in my conversations and correspondence with James since his arrest and incarceration, I still see that same commitment to truth. I have been deeply impressed by his candor and willingness to accept responsibility for his actions. He has not made excuses for his behavior nor has he sought to deflect blame: he has owned his guilt and acknowledged the justness of punishment for his actions.

James has also used this crisis to reflect on critical aspects of his life: his faith, his family, and his friends. His actions have shattered his professional reputation, caused grave scandal to his family, and caused

many friends to abandon him. Yet, in the face of this, he has not given into anger, self-pity, or blame shifting. In his letters to me and our phone conversations, his remorse for his crimes is abundantly clear. In response, he has sought to re-orient his life, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually, to find ways to make amends and emerge from this ordeal as a chastened and productive member of society once more.

As a friend, I continue to support and pray for James. Throughout his incarceration and beyond, I look forward to staying in touch with him and assisting him on his journey of redemption—a journey to which he is irrevocably committed. I sincerely hope that you will favorably consider my assessment of James' contributions and disposition as you impose a just sentence on him.

Sincerely,

**Mark
Mitchell**

Digitally signed by
Mark Mitchell
Date: 2023.08.29
10:34:55 -04'00'

Mark E. Mitchell
Colonel, US Army (Ret)

The Honorable Claude M. Hilton
US District Court Judge
401 Courthouse Square
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Dear Judge Hilton,

September 5, 2023

I am writing to you regarding James Meek and his upcoming sentencing hearing. I shared with you in my pretrial letter that I first encountered James in 2014 when four Americans were being held hostage by ISIS. James devoted an extraordinary amount of time and energy in reporting in such a way as to bring to light the concern, pain and ultimately, the grief of the families of the hostages held by ISIS. I trust you are aware of his many extraordinary and compassionate investigations and reporting on behalf of others who have felt justice ignored them. James has made many meaningful contributions as a professional, as a father, son, advocate, friend and as an engaged local, national, and global citizen.

James' remorse and willingness to take responsibility are far more in character with the person I have come to know over the last 9 years, than the actions detailed in the charges in which he acknowledged guilt. James' character includes someone who chose to step away from his career, a significant book deal, recognition from the Foley Foundation, and to distance himself from personal and professional contacts to avoid bringing harm and embarrassment to others, as opposed to using those various platforms for his advantage as accountability became inevitable. These steps isolated him and had a significant negative impact on his finances, career, and future. My hope is that his ownership of responsibility and the many instances of how he used his position, talent, and knowledge for the benefit of others, will be a factor in sentencing.

I trust that James will continue to make amends in the ways that he is able, and that justice is capable of both holding someone accountable, but also leaving room for redemption and renewal. That trafficking and exploiting children is so prolific in our country, and that consumers are very often people with education and privilege, is perplexing. However, to end this, we must also better understand it, and create a path for healing and restoration for victims and perpetrators. I believe James can and will contribute to a better understanding of how so many get drawn into this culture, and how one extricates themselves from the addiction and lure of the online community that engages in the distribution and fantasy chats that surround the sexual exploitation of women and children.

I urge you to consider the minimum sentencing for James Meek, and assignment to a facility that offers the greatest opportunity and resources for exiting the prison system in a way that benefits society, by contributing to healing and wholeness not simply shame and punishment. I will continue to support and encourage James during his sentence and upon his release, as I believe he will continue a life-long journey to make amends and to contribute to a better understanding of the culture of harm that entangled him, and to use his experience, knowledge, and skills in constructive and meaningful ways that benefit individuals and society.

Thank you for the difficult work that you on behalf of victims and society.

Respectfully,

Rev. Kathleen Day

[REDACTED]

Flagstaff, AZ

[REDACTED]

September 13, 2023

The Honorable Claude M. Hilton
US District Court Judge
401 Courthouse Square
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Dear Judge Hilton,

My name is Nezamuddin Nezami. I am a former Afghan National Army Special Forces engineer and weapons sergeant. I served alongside US Special Forces during hundreds of combat missions from 2008 to 2018. I was selected in 2015 for the Special Forces Qualification Course at Fort Bragg, NC, which I completed with American Green Berets. It was at that time that I met and became friends with James Meek.

When I found out about James's crime, it hurt me and I was absolutely heartbroken. James called me personally and explained his guilt. It is a very serious crime. I am a father myself, and the fact that James engaged in this crime has absolutely devastated me. It was very painful because of everything I personally know from my interactions with James. In addition to the harm that James caused to others, he also ruined his kids' lives, and his own life. Undoubtedly, James has to pay for his crime.

But James did a lot of good things for people in his life too. James was devoted to helping me to escape my Taliban enemies. The Taliban assassinated my friends with whom I received Special Forces training in the US and they were actively hunting me. James ensured my escape from Afghanistan. While a lot of people did not take time to help, James cared and took the time to help me. He helped me prepare my special immigrant visa in 2020 and didn't stop there. In 2021, Taliban began texting me death threats and closed in on the World Bank-funded gas power plant outpost, where I was a Security Director at the time. We talked almost daily as James knocked on every door and called every contact he had in the Congress, the White House, the CIA and the State Department trying to get me evacuated from Afghanistan before my homeland fell to Taliban rule.

James located and enlisted the help of two US Special Forces officers that I served with, who helped me to narrowly escape my outpost and find a safe house in Kabul. When Taliban occupied Kabul and started a door-to-door search for Afghan government soldiers like me to kill, James advised me to go to the Kabul airport. As I was navigating the chaotic streets of Kabul, under danger of being discovered and killed, James and my friends made desperate calls to find somebody inside the airport who would extract me from danger. James finally reached a US Embassy Diplomat, who was able to arrange my airport entry at a US Marine checkpoint. When I was safe inside, James was instrumental in arranging a successful evacuation of my wife, our 3 children and 2 cousins accompanying them. All of us are now safe in the USA, very much due to James willingness to help, when many others turned their back.

In addition to saving me, James played an important role in guiding to safety many of my comrades I had once fought beside in Afghan Special Forces, using a route that became known as "Pineapple Express." Even when the evacuation was not possible or successful, James helped many other people that I knew personally. For example, when an elite member of Special Forces was shot by Taliban and was not able evacuate, James helped to find him and also sent him money to be treated. My friend did not get out of Afghanistan, but he survived because he used James's help to hire a doctor and get treatment.

James and I call each other "brother". I am indebted to James for my life, the life of my family and of many of my brothers-in-arm. I will continue to support James because I know he is a good person, despite the mistakes he has made. I believe James has learned a lesson from this, and he will never violate the law again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Nezamuddin', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Nezamuddin Nezami

August 1, 2023

The Honorable Claude M. Hilton
US District Court Judge
401 Courthouse Square
Alexandria, Virginia

Dear Judge Hilton:

Subject: Mr. James Meek

Thank you for the opportunity to communicate with the Court in this matter. I am a combat veteran, a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army who flew helicopters in Vietnam for the 101st Airborne Division. Later, I was a defense contractor engaged in classified work helping protect the national security of the United States. I went on to serve as a staff director for the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security. My last position prior to retirement was as a professor of practice at Georgetown University. After a varied national security career spanning over 50 years, I believe I can identify people who are sincere in their efforts to serve and protect U.S. national security. I believe James Meek is one of those individuals.

I first met James in the Spring of 2014 while serving in the U.S. House of Representatives. Initially we were colleagues and after a promotion, I became his supervisor. We saw each other almost daily in the workplace for over two years. During the time I supervised James I can rightly say his primary goal as a senior investigator for Congress was to protect the security of the United States. During our time on the Committee, the threat from terrorism was omnipresent. It was our job, James and mine, to make sure the different elements of our government (Federal Bureau of Investigation, Central Intelligence Agency, Departments of State, Defense and Homeland Security and other agencies) worked together effectively to counter that threat.

To illustrate what I mean, right after the Boston Marathon Bombings it was the Committee's job to investigate why the attack happened and what could have been done to prevent it. I assigned James to be the lead investigator. Our full report can still be read on line at the Committee's website. The bottom line is the Federal Bureau of Investigation knew of Tamerlan Tsarnaev (one of the bombers), suspected him of terrorist ties and had even interviewed him at one point prior to the attack. Nonetheless, the Bureau never informed the Boston Police Department

they had a suspected terrorist in their city. James Meek uncovered this failing to adequately coordinate and communicate between the applicable federal and state agencies.

The Court should trust when I state for the record that this was no easy task. Bureaucracies do not like admitting to their mistakes. As a direct result of these findings the Bureau changed its procedures and began to far better coordinate with police departments around the country. This is but one of many examples I can provide where James made a tremendous contribution to U.S. national security.

I do not condone James' actions that have led to him to this point in his life. Rather, I contend that he has also done a great deal of good for our country. It is no understatement he has saved American lives as a result of his work. I respectfully request the Court takes his past contributions into account as it moves forward to sentencing and consider the leniency they merit.

Sincerely,



R. Nicholas Palarino, Ph.D.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Honorable Claude M. Hilton
US District Court Judge
401 Courthouse Square
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Dear Judge Hilton,

I am a Gold Star Mother. My youngest son was killed in action on October 4th, 2017, in Niger, Africa. He is SSG Dustin M. Wright, an Engineer with the Army's 3rd Group Special Forces. I am also the mother to three other sons. My oldest son is in jail for drugs and other bad choices, my middle son, who has served in the Army National Guard and is now serving in the Army going through Special Forces Medic Training, and my stepson works in the civilian sector. I also served in the Army National Guard as a Combat Medic. I am a grandmother to three granddaughters and two grandsons, 10, 4, 3, 2, & 7 months. Wife to my best friend and the love of my life.

I met James after my son Dustin was killed early in 2018. James covered the story of my sons, LaDavid Johnson, Jeremiah Johnson, and Brian Black's deaths and the attack on their unit. James was instrumental in uncovering the military's mishandling and misinformation surrounding the attack. Our family, as well as LaDavid, Jeremiah, and Brian's families, are forever grateful to James and his team for helping us clear our sons' names and their unit. His commitment to the truth and desire to bring light to the mistakes made by the chain of command is the only reason we have the truth. I know there are other families James has helped in the same way as ours. I consider James my friend, one who helped me through the hard days of my life.

I know James admitted to serious and heartbreaking offenses, and I know that there are no excuses for such behavior from any person. I just wanted you to know the other James, the one that has helped so many people, the James that I believe will continue to help people, no matter what circumstances he finds himself in. I know everything happens for a reason, even if we don't know what that reason is. I like to believe it is to make us better people. I believe James has already and will continue to become a better person.

I believe James has already started down a path of recompense for his actions. Seeking spiritual guidance and his volunteer work in the DC area is proof of his commitment to change his life's direction.

I will continue to be James's friend, to be there to help him move forward in life after he completes his sentence. I believe that a strong network of family, friends, community,

and professional support is the most effective way to recover for someone who has made a bad choice in life.

Thank you for reading my letter. It is my hope that you will see the value in James that I have witnessed and that not all of his choices have been wrong. He has a heart for others in need and finds a way to tell their truths when they can not. He has given voices to the dead to make sure they are not forgotten.

Thank you for your service to our Country. I know your job is not an easy one, one that most could not do.

Sincerely,

Terri Criscio

MEMORANDUM FOR THE COURT

SUBJ: James Meek

Permit me to introduce myself. My name is Marion Bowman, but everyone calls me Spike. I am a retired Navy Captain. For most of my career I was a judge advocate but, before the Navy sent me for the first of my law degrees, I was an intelligence officer. I mention that because my career has been unusual - most of my 41 years of Government service has been spent in intelligence or using the law to support intelligence and covert operations or unconventional warfare, but for the reasons noted below my for many years I was besieged with reporters and journalists.

In addition to my Naval service, I am retired from the Senior Executive Service of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and from the Senior National Intelligence Service of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI). Along the way I spent 16 years teaching graduate school adjunct at The George Washington University (GWU).

The great majority of journalists and reporters that sought me out was when I was at the FBI. My task at the FBI had been to build a National Security Law Program within the Bureau to focus primarily on terrorism and espionage, but also more mundane issues related to the national security such as industrial espionage, certain export controls and even as the lynchpin for mutual support between the FBI and other agencies.

During my 11 years at the FBI, I came into almost daily contact with reporters, authors, and persons responsible for programs for which I was asked to contribute or speak, both in the United States and abroad. Your honor will understand that I had to be very cautious with those contacts. My acquaintance with James Meek came in that era (1995-2006). I was cautious with James as I was with others but during the intermittent contacts I had with him, I came to trust him not to try to pry information from me but I also observed within him something of a rarity today; as a journalist he would report only what was newsworthy and only with the facts that could be corroborated.

After retiring from the FBI, I had a brief stint at the National War College before being recruited by the DNI to become the Deputy National Counterintelligence Executive. My work in that capacity was not nearly so beckoning to journalists but James and I met up occasionally at conferences where I would be speaking.

You can appreciate that integrity is important to me. I can't condone the reasons that bring James to this Court, it is very disappointing to me. My purpose today is to tell you that the James I know always kept his word and he was always respectful. In my earlier Judge Advocate years I tried perhaps 200 criminal cases. I found references such as this to be helpful - I hope this Court will find it so.

M.E. Bowman

CAPT USN (ret.)

SES, FBI (ret.)

SNIS, DNI (ret.)

Faculty, GWU (ret.)

Distinguished Fellow, National Security Program, U.Va.

Hon. Claude M. Hilton
United States District Judge
401 Courthouse Square
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Judge Hilton:

I served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Kentucky from March 1985 until December of 2019. Along the way I was Civil Rights and Environmental Crimes Coordinator, and served as Professional Responsibility and Ethics Officer. For many years I was General Crimes Chief and later, Deputy Criminal Chief, and finally Criminal Chief from 2010 to 2015. Along the way, I tried 70 jury trials, primarily drug-gun cases, environmental and mine safety crimes. One of my specialties, for which I did training for the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, was in violations of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA). It was in carrying out this passion that I became acquainted with James Meek.

In 2001, two friends who worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs of the Department of Interior asked me to participate on a trip through Oklahoma. I called it "show and tell" for BIA to let the tribes know that among BIA's many responsibilities, the agency was concerned and doing something about the theft of tribal antiquities. James was a part of our team which travelled and made presentations to several tribes across Oklahoma. In passing through, we visited the Oklahoma City Memorial, dedicated to the victims of the bombing of the federal building there on April 19, 1995. I will never forget James standing over one of concrete desks that the memorial uses to pay tribute to the victims. One of those victims was his cousin.

James and I remained friends after that trip and kept in touch. If I was in Washington, I contacted James for a drink or a meal and if he was in Louisville (once for a wedding) James contacted me and he had dinner with me and my wife. We talked often about the looting of items buried within the graves of Native Americans and the culture which surrounds the sale of those items at artifact shows. He had mentioned writing a book on the subject and for those of us who share this passion, having a writer of his caliber bring attention to the subject has been a goal. However, as the war on terror developed, his attention was drawn elsewhere. His passion became helping the families of bereaved and missing US service men and women in getting answers about what happened to their loved ones. He was good at it!

Your honor, those of us who know James, including his old friends from the BIA, are stunned by what has happened. No doubt the chance encounter between President Obama and James at Arlington National Cemetery in November of 2009 has been recounted to you. James was paying his respects to a soldier he knew, a friend, who gave his life in the war on terror. That James Meek, and the one I met on that Oklahoma trip in 2001, paying his respects to a relative at the Oklahoma City Memorial, is the one I choose to remember.

Finally, your Honor, from my past experience as an AUSA, I am well aware of the sentencing options before you. All that I can say is that James is a uniquely gifted man as a writer and journalist. He has much more to give and I look forward to the day when that can occur.

Very Truly Yours,

Randy Ream, KY Bar # 56887

The Honorable Claude M. Hilton
US District Court Judge
401 Courthouse Square
Alexandria, VA 22314

21 August 2023

Dear Judge Hilton,

My name is Jim Gant, a retired Special Forces officer with more than two decades of dedicated service in the United States Army, including Desert Storm (1990) and extensive combat experience in the Global War on Terror in Afghanistan and Iraq.

I am writing this letter to provide my perspective on James Meek and his potential path forward. There is no excuse for James' morally repugnant wrongdoing, and I fully acknowledge the gravity of his crimes, particularly the immeasurable harm inflicted upon innocent children.

My personal and professional interactions with James span over a decade. Professionally, I found James to be reliable and trustworthy. He conducted a national news feature on my experiences in Afghanistan. James handled the narrative with respect and sensitivity.

On a personal level, we spent considerable time together, forging a friendship that extended far beyond our professional relationship. We shared meals, took walks, laughed and talked about our mutual interests. There was never any hint of immoral behavior during our time together.

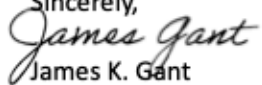
Discovering the awful crimes James committed left me in shock.

My Christian faith plays the central role in my life. I am a Christian before anything else – prioritizing faith, followed by my roles as a husband and a father. My deep-rooted belief in Jesus leads me to believe that James has the capacity to engage in intensive rehabilitation efforts. I believe he can, given time, fully face up to the horrific wrongs he committed. These crimes against defenseless children are vile, and James should be punished. James has pleaded guilty and voiced remorse, a first step in the long road to taking responsibility for his actions. I believe that given time, counseling, and spiritual guidance, James has the potential to reenter society as a positive, contributing member.

I am committed to meeting with James weekly during his incarceration to support his journey toward self-discovery and redemption as a child of God. Despite the challenges he will face, I will stand by James.

Sentencing, as I understand, allows for some discretion. I trust that you will make a just and thoughtful decision.

Thank you for your service as a judge – a role that carries significant weight and responsibility. Your dedication to justice is deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,

James K. Gant
US Army Special Forces (ret)
Silver Star Recipient

September 15, 2023

Dear Judge Hilton,

Your Honor, My name is Doug Kimme and I am writing this letter on behalf of Mr. James Gordon Meek.

I became familiar with Mr. Meek in 2009 while he was working for the New York Daily News when I spoke with him about the death of my son, Army PFC Danny Kimme who was killed in action in Iraq. Two other soldiers were also killed during the same engagement. I maintained communications with Mr. Meek as he continued to investigate the circumstances of my son's death in Iraq, publishing several stories.

After reading the stories Mr. Meek wrote about my son's engagement and the communications I had with Mr. Meek, I found him to be a hard worker and an honest journalist as he reported our story.

Mr. Meek has also earned the trust of other two Gold Star families as he investigated and reported on the their stories.

Sir, I do not approve or condone the behavior which Mr. Meek has been convicted of.

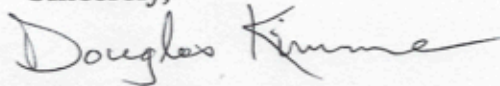
However, I would ask the Court to have some leniency and compassion for Mr. Meek.

He is an educated man and to my knowledge, he has no prior criminal arrests or convictions. Mr. Meek has risked his safety and life while embedded with U.S. forces in Iraq and in Afghanistan subjecting him to the horrors of war which I'm sure has affected him as it would any person.

September 15, 2023

I do have faith that Mr. Meek would abide by any Court imposed provisions for rehabilitation and move forward for his family and for himself. In my opinion, Mr. Meek still has much he can contribute to our Nation as well as a strong desire to get back on a good and healthy path.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Douglas Kimme". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Douglas Kimme
Fisher, IL.

Veteran, U.S.A.F. Special Operations.
100% D.A.V. Service connected.
Retired Police Officer. 26 yrs.
Gold Star Dad.

September 18, 2023

The Honorable Claude M. Hilton
US District Court Judge
401 Courthouse Square
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Dear Judge Hilton,

I am writing regarding the case of James Gordon Meek. To place my comments in context, I am a retired police officer and investigated crimes against children for 11 years. I taught this subject in our local police academy and was qualified as an expert witness in this area by the Superior Courts of Los Angeles and Ventura (CA) counties. I am also a licensed minister of The Missionary Church (Fort Wayne, IN).

I want to begin by saying that I in no way condone Mr. Meek's actions nor do I offer any excuse whatsoever for them. But I did want to share another side of Mr. Meek that may be helpful to you in determining a sentence in this case. For almost 40 years I have led a small, non-profit, faith-based organization that supports overseas missionaries with security matters. My specialty is hostage negotiation. I have negotiated more than 140 individual international kidnapping cases around the world. It is in that context that I met Mr. Meek.

As you know, Mr. Meek is a journalist. In connection with the case of an American missionary kidnapped by the al Qaeda franchise operating in Niger and Mali, I contacted Mr. Meek because I read some of his material and I thought he might be able to help me in this case. Mr. Meek did indeed agree to help. He shared his knowledge and perspective on the jihadist movement in the Sahel and provided information on specific persons of interest in this case. He also traveled, at his own expense, to Northern California to record a TV interview with the hostage's wife. This video was ultimately broadcast and delivered to the captor network and was, in my judgment, a significant part of the "package" that led to this hostage's safe release in March after 6 ½ years in captivity.

During this time, I also became aware of Mr. Meek's reporting on, and advocacy for, Gold Star families and his passion for supporting our military forces and addressing injustices in that system. The James Meek I met, observed and worked

with for over a year is a compassionate, very intelligent man who I found to be genuinely interested and caring for the families of hostages and the military. He made a real difference for good in those cases.

As I said, I cannot condone or excuse his actions (although perhaps I have a greater understanding than a layman). I am impressed that he has admitted guilt and accepted responsibility for his actions. I just wanted to provide you an opportunity to get a glimpse of another side of this man, one that was committed to doing good and in fact did do good.

I am available at any time to provide any additional information.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Klamser". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Robert Klamser
Minister, The Missionary Church
Lieutenant (ret.), Simi Valley (CA) Police Department
Telephone: (805) 207-2261
Email: rklamser@cricon.org

August 10, 2023

Scott Bartlett Dance



The Honorable Claude M. Hilton
US District Court Judge
401 Courthouse Square
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Judge Hilton,

My name is Scott Bartlett Dance and I have known James Gordon Meek for thirty-six years. To pay the bills, I am a marketing consultant, art dealer and occasionally work on local political campaigns. I met James through my brother Mark. Both James and Mark were enrolled and graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts. I had moved to Richmond from Chapel Hill, North Carolina and my brother and I shared an old home not far from the VCUarts campus. During this time, I would participate in both Mark's and James' art projects. Working with James on art school films back in the eighties, it never occurred to me that James would one day win an Emmy. And I still maintain that James' gift as an illustrator and artist exceed his journalistic talents. James was the best at VCUarts. Though like effective reporting, art is also a communication tool. James, a New York Times bestselling author, is undoubtedly a gifted communicator.

Over those next few years, which included trips to DC to stay with both his Mother and his Father, I came to know James well. I also warmly regarded his Dad, John Martin Meek, a speechwriter and public affairs executive, as a good friend. Later, I enjoyed seeing either one of them, or both together, if lucky, when James and/or John visited Los Angeles when I lived on the West Coast. James and I have always stayed in touch over the years.

The nature and severity of the charges to which James has pleaded guilty still come as a complete shock, though he did once confide in me he was a victim of sexual abuse when he was a child. I also know this has exacted a tremendous toll on the emotional wellbeing of both his children. I worry very much for them as they are at a stage in life where the presence of a Dad cannot be discounted- particularly as he was the parent who was primarily responsible for raising them. I've been able to speak to James since the FBI raid and this sad result of his behavior weighs most heavily. James is also the only child of his Mother, Reed Isbell. In her eighties, Reed has become more reliant on James. I would also like to note that James has intimated to me numerous times that he takes full responsibility for his actions.

Additionally, I would like to mention something I've noticed about James over the years. In conversation, James would not talk of Emmys or journalistic accolades. Instead, homeless and wounded veterans were usually the dominant topic. Alternately, he would speak with urgent concern about refugees- particularly ones he had personally befriended. Individuals who had cast their lot with US forces and then were summarily forgotten, though never discarded by James.

When considering sentencing an adequate sentence, please also weigh the path forward for James. Knowing him, he will endeavor to both help others and illuminate what has happened in this experience. For the egregious and specific crimes for which he was involved, giving the story for others will undoubtedly be a requisite for him. No one discusses these things- or they are not explored adequately. Perhaps, we see a nebulous abstraction in aftermath of such crimes- a brief report accompanied by mob vitriol in the comment section of a story. Consequently, it appears paraphilia and specifically pedophilic disorders remain hidden and unacknowledged- until it is way too late. There would be no one better suited than James to approach the topic and actively change this. There must have been off-ramps or detours that James missed or tragically ignored. I've not yet discussed that with him.

Brandeis made the famous statement that "sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants". In addition to veterans and refugees, James can approach absolution by helping others. I have not yet done so, but I will propose that James lay bare this entire story. If he cannot interest a larger publishing house, I'll create an S-Corp or LLC and open an account at Lightning Source for printing and use IngramSpark for expanded book distribution.

In closing, conscientious sentencing will determine timeline. James will continue to help others. Not only veterans and refugees, but now those with pedophilic disorders who, due to moral, behavioral or psychological defect, create victims and the insidious demand for child pornography. It is an abhorrent and ugly realm, minus sunlight- a horror which has tragically lacked adequate communication.

Sincerely,

Scott Bartlett Dance

August 16, 2023

The Honorable Claude M. Hilton
US District Court Judge
401 Courthouse Square
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Dear Judge Hilton,

I am former reporter for the Washington Post. For most of my time there I covered federal and local law enforcement. I was the lead reporter on the anthrax case, covered 9/11 and wrote about mortgage fraud and public corruption in Washington. I'm currently in Detroit, my hometown, doing podcasts and freelancing for national publications.

During my years of reporting in Washington, I got to know James Meek, a fellow reporter. There was a group of journalists from national media outlets who socialized together, and James and I were in that group. He had a reputation of being an outstanding and accurate reporter with immense integrity, and an all-around good guy. James eventually began working as a producer for the Brian Ross investigative unit at ABC News.

In 2016, while I was running a news website in Detroit, called Deadline Detroit, and we were looking for a second round of funding to stay alive, James helped me land a parttime job with the ABC unit. I was able to work from Detroit, generate some income and keep my website alive until we secured additional funding two years later. At that point, I left ABC to dedicate all my time to Deadline Detroit.

Without that job, in all likelihood, Deadline Detroit would not have survived. Last Fall, after 10 ½ years, I finally closed the publication, which employed five people and numerous freelance writers. (It's still currently up as we transfer all the stories to the servers at the University of Michigan Bentley Historical Library)

James and I worked on many breaking domestic and international terrorism stories together at ABC. And I always had faith in his integrity that he would never let the unit broadcast a story that was not solid and fully vetted. He would challenge the bosses when he felt we were going too far, beyond the solid facts. He had the utmost integrity as a reporter and a friend, and always offered sage advice.

Fast forward to June 2022 when I was visiting D.C. James and I got together, and he informed me that the FBI had raided his apartment and seized his computers and phones, and it had nothing to do with his job. He didn't get into much detail, but having covered federal law enforcement for decades, I understood the gravity of his crime.

To be honest, I was shocked, having never gotten any indication that James was capable of such crimes. I was also very disappointed, upset and saddened by all of this, as were many of our friends and fellow journalists.

In subsequent phone conversations, after James was arrested, he talked about the shame. He also talked about the need to show friends and family the importance of admitting responsibility. He talked about how, not only unethical his behavior was, but also criminal, and how he needed to be punished. He was clearly remorseful. He realized he had never dealt with some childhood issues that had clearly morphed into very damaging behavior that harmed himself and society.

At the same time, we talked about the pain he was dealing with and the soul searching and his willingness to address these issues through meditation, religion, and therapy. He also talked about how important it was to still do good in society and help others. It was truly heartfelt.

Our conversations were initially a little uncomfortable. But I came to accept the situation, and still care deeply about James as a friend and remain supportive as he makes his journey through the criminal justice system.

I know he's trying hard to address his deep-rooted issues and I'm confident he can return to society as a changed person after serving his sentence and contribute by helping the less fortunate in whatever way he can.

Sincerely,

Allan Lengel

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Dear Judge Hilton,

My name is Steve Lindsey, and I am writing to you on behalf of my good friend, James. I have had the privilege of knowing James for several years, and throughout our acquaintance, I have witnessed his integrity and dedication to his family and our country.

To provide a brief background, I had the honor of serving for 5 years in the US Marine Corps and 14 years with the US Department of State as a US Diplomat. My last role was as a Special Assistant to the National Security Adviser at the White House for 2 1/2 years. Currently, I work at Google in our Legal Investigations Support office as a Policy Specialist, based in Austin, Texas.

James, whom I met through a mutual friend in Washington, DC, has demonstrated exceptional character. We immediately connected and would engage in discussions about current events, as well as my experiences overseas, particularly serving in Afghanistan. His genuine kindness and passion for his work as a combat reporter in some of the world's most dangerous countries were apparent.

During our friendship, James introduced me to his two daughters over dinner. It was evident that he cherished his family, and I witnessed the special bond between him and his daughters. In particular, he expressed immense pride in his oldest daughter attending college in Edinburgh.

A few years ago, James approached me seeking assistance for a brave young Afghan soldier assigned to a US Special Forces team. This soldier and his family were in danger as the Taliban pursued them. Though the US Embassy had promised to issue special visas to Afghan citizens, the process experienced a significant backlog. James went above and beyond, leveraging all possible resources to facilitate the evacuation of this family from Kabul. His commitment to helping this young man and his loved ones demonstrated his compassion and determination.

Moreover, I am certain that there are numerous other instances where James has displayed heroism and compassion throughout his life. James deeply regrets his actions and has shown remorse. I firmly believe that he has learned from his mistakes, and there is no doubt in my mind that such behavior will never recur. Upon his release, he will have a strong support system in place to help him reintegrate into society.

Thank you for your consideration and understanding.

Sincerely,

Steve

The Honorable Claude M. Hilton
US District Court Judge
401 Courthouse Square
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
September 21, 2023

Dear Judge Hilton,

My name is David Sharrett. I am a retired English teacher. I taught the bulk of my 30 year career at Langley High School in McLean, Va. My wife and I currently live in Forest, Virginia in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

I have known James Meek since he was a freshman at Langley. He was a student in my English class in 1983 and then again as a senior in 1987. James was an excellent student who possessed top shelf artistic ability and a keen sense for great literature.

As with many of my former students, James became a friend after he graduated from high school and we occasionally kept in touch. Our paths crossed at one of his class reunions in 2007 that I was fortunate enough to be invited to.

It was at this event where I shared with James that our son Dave had enlisted in the Army and was deployed in Iraq with the 101st Airborne. At the time, James was working with the New York Daily News and began following where our son was and how his unit was engaged. I still have emails from James detailing the very

dangerous nature of what the 101st was doing at the time. The Army was in the middle of "The Surge" and Dave's unit was ground zero for it.

In January, 2008 our son was killed in an ambush. James was among the first people I contacted when we received the news.

What followed for our family was a five year ordeal of getting the truth about how our son had died on that day in January. What I can say is that without the effort that James put into our case, we never would have gotten to the truth of what happened and never would have found the small measure of peace and closure that such an interruption in life can bring.

James worked tirelessly at great cost to give our son the voice that had been taken from him. It speaks to the kind of man we've known him to be. He did this because we were friends and because he saw an enormous injustice that needed to be addressed. We could not have given Dave his voice without the sacrifice of time and energy that James gave.

My wife and I were at a TAPS retreat for Gold Star parents in Nashville in 2018 and met another couple who had experienced a similarly questionable tragedy with their son. When they heard the ordeal that we'd been through, they approached us and asked how we'd done it. Within an hour, they were on the phone with James, who launched into yet an exhaustive investigation to vindicate the names of brave soldiers who gave their lives for their

country.

This is a thread we know that runs through James's life. It speaks of sacrifice and loyalty. We know that James has had a deep connection to those who've served to protect our country and a willingness to help people in need.

We are fully aware that James has admitted to serious offenses dealing with child pornography. I spoke with him by phone several weeks ago regarding his desire to admit to what he has done. It was an incredibly difficult conversation for him given the nature of his offense. He was contrite and humiliated, and we were left with the very strong, personal assurance that this will never happen again. My wife and I told James that our friendship matters, that we still love him and that we will support him during and after his sentence has been served. He remains important to our family. We both consider him as one of our sons.

Very respectfully,

Dave and Vicki Sharrett

A rectangular area containing two lines of redacted text, represented by black boxes with a white cross-hatch pattern.